

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MILAN 2753
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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: PIERO BASSETTI ON US TRIP AND ITALIAN SCENE

SUMMARY: LEFT WING DC LOMBARDY DEPUTY
BASSETTI DESCRIBES CONVERSATIONS IN US, EXPER-
IENCE IN PARLIAMENT AND APPRAISES PCI.

1. US TRIP

US TRIP CONFIRMED HIS PREVIOUSLY STATED EN-
THUSIASTIC VIEW THAT US WAS EXPLODING WITH
DYNAMISM AND CREATIVITY. IT WAS ANOTHER WORLD
THAT ITALIANS SIMPLY CULD NOT IMAGINE. HE
WAS VERY SATISFIED WITH TALKS WITH
BREZINSKI, SONNENFELDT, MALMGREN, GEIGER AND
GARDNER THAT HE HAD HIMSELF ARRANGED. ON THE
OTHER HAND HE FELT THAT HE HAD BEEN HELD AT
ARMS LENGTH BY DEPARTMENT AND WAS NOT VERY
HAPPY ABOUT THAT.

2. ITALIAN PARLIAMENT

HE WAS ENORMOUSLY ENJOYING LIFE AS A DEPUTY
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AND WORKING FURIOUSLY AT IT. HE WAS IMPRESSED
BY THEQUALITY OF THE DC MEMBERSHIP WHICH WAS,
HE SAID, HEAD AND SHOULDERS ABOVE THAT OF COM-
MUNISTS. WHILE COMMUNISTS COULD DELIVER DIS-

CIPLINED VOTE ON EVERY ISSUE, THEIR FIELD

GRADE LEADERSHIP WAS VERY WEAK. HERE DC
EXCELLED WITH ABUNDANCE OF WIDELY EXPERIENCED
DEPUTIES--FORMER REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL
PRESIDENTS, FORMER MEMBERS OF CABINET, ETC.
CONTRARY TO POPULAR IMAGE, DC WAS A LOT
BETTER THAN ITS COMMUNIST OPPOSITON.

3. WHILE PCI WAS ALWAYS ON FLOOR TO VOTE,
DC WAS OFTEN SPOTTY AND SOCIALISTS HOPELESS.
BASSETTI SAID SOCIALISTS HAD WORST RECORD
FOR ATTENDANCE IN CHAMBER AND IN COMMITTEES
WHICH RARELY ATTENDED. IN HIS ESTIMATE,
IT WAS TOO LATE TO SAVE THE SOCIALISTS AS

A SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL FORCE.

4. COMMUNISTS AND ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT
PCI, HE SAID, WAS HAVING TROUBLES AND HE
THOUGHT IT HAD REACHED HIGH WATER MARK. HOW-
EVER, IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT
SURVIVAL AND THIS GAVE IT SIGNIFICANT
LEVERAGE. IN FACT, EACH TIME ANDREOTTI
HAD TO TIGHTEN AUSTERITY SCREW, PCI WAS
BROUGHT CLOSER TO PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT.
NOR SHOULD IT BE THOUGHT, SAID BUSSETTI, THAT
PCI HAD NO ALTERNATIVE TO ANDREOTTI GOVERN-
MENT. IT HAS EXCELLENT ALTERNATIVE IN

NEW NATIONAL ELECTIONS WHICH WOULD FREE
IT OF EMBARRASSMENT OF SUPPORT FOR ANDREOTTI
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FOR WHICH IT HAS SO LITTLE OF TANGIBLE
NATURE TO SHOW.

5. BASSETTI CONTENDED THAT ANDREOTTI WAS
BRILLIANT IN CONDUCTING PRESENT BALANCING
ACT AND HE CONDEMNED LOMBARDY TYPE SOLUTION
FOR NATIONAL GOVERNMENT.FINA

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